

CASHMERE MISGOVERNMENT.

BY ROBERT THORP.

DEDICATED

(WITHOUT PERMISSION)

TO

HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

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CASHMERE MISGOVERNMENT.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

OWING to that peculiar arrangement between the Government of India and the Jamoo Government, by which Englishmen are excluded from the dominions of the latter during the winter months, and also to the well-grounded fear of the Maharajah's subjects to speak of the oppressive system under which they live, I feel confident that most of the following information, which I have, not without difficulty, collected, will be new, alike to those who have travelled in Cashmere, and to those whose knowledge of the country and its government is only derived from newspapers and the talk of society.

I am therefore inclined to believe that the communications I have to make regarding a country for whose welfare (as I shall endeavour to shew) we are responsible, will be of interest, first, to those who wish that the Government they serve, or live under, should act with less regard to the expediency of the moment than in such a manner as shall procure

for it the character of a high-minded, an unselfish, and a just power.

Second, to those who can feel pity for the undeserved sufferings of men, and disgust and indignation at the spectacle of a people whose characteristics (both intellectual and moral) give evidence of former greatness, trampled upon by a race in every way inferior to themselves, and steadily deteriorating under the influence of an oppressive despotism which bars the way to all improvement, whether social, intellectual, or religious.

Third, to those who, from their position, share in the responsibility which, in my opinion, attaches to the Government of India regarding the people whom it sold into the slavery of Gulab Singh.

Without further premise or apology, I shall therefore begin by laying before the reader a detailed account of the

LAND PRODUCE TAXATION SYSTEM IN CASHMERE.

Of almost everything produced by the soil, Government takes a large proportion, and the numerous officials who are employed in collecting it are paid by an award of so much grain from the share of the zemindars.

The following is a list of the different officials who are concerned in the collection and division of the land produce, and in the general government of the country outside the city of Srinagur, which is under the Governor of Cashmere and the Chief Magistrate.

The principal of these is

The Tehsildar.—He has under him from two to five pergunnahs; he exercises a supervision over the accounts of the “kardars” within his district; he has powers of punishment up to a fortnight’s imprisonment and ten rupees fine; all complaints, disputes, and offences occurring within his tehsil are referred to him; he has from 200 to 400 sepoye under him, and is responsible only to the Dihwan or Governor of Cashmere, who resides in the city.

The Thanedar.—Is the chief officer over each pergunnah; he has slighter powers of punishment, and from 40 to 50 sepoye under him. His chief duties are to make inspections throughout his pergunnah, and to make reports concerning the crops and general matters to his tehsildar.

The Kardar—Is the chief of the officials who are personally concerned in the collection of the land produce. He has under him a certain number of villages, of whose crops he has to keep a strict account, and to each of which he goes in person at the time when the different crops ripen, in order to superintend the different distribution of each. He reports to his thanedar, and causes the Government shares of the crops to be despatched to the city, or elsewhere, according to the orders he may receive. In lieu of some of the inferior kinds of grain, the Government will occasionally take an equivalent in money from the kardar. The zemindars do not, however, benefit by this arrangement, since in these cases the kardar takes from them the full amount of produce, and sells the amount, for which the Government have taken money, to his own advantage; and since this arrangement is greatly preferred by the kardars, there must be a large demand for those grains among the people: since, in order to make their own profits, they are, of course, obliged to sell them at a higher rate than the very high prices demanded by Government, a scale of which I shall give in the sequel.

Over each village there is a

Mokudlum—Whose duty is to report any irregularities or thefts, to collect coolies and carriage for Government or others, and to keep an account of the crops of his village, in conjunction with another official called the

Patwaree—Whose special duty is to keep a separate account with each house of the zemindars of his village of the different crops belonging to it. To each village there is a patwaree; he is paid by the zemindars, and is a necessary

expense entailed on the zemindars by the mode of collecting their tax. He is usually a pundit (a).

The Shugdurs.—There are from one to four “shugdurs” in each village, according to its size. Their duties are to watch the crops while in the ground, and the Government shares of the same, after they have been set aside and are waiting their removal to the Government store-houses. It is said to be a common instance of oppression for the shugdurs to extort money from a zemindar by threatening to accuse him of stealing the Government grain, in which case, rather than court an investigation whose justice he has every reason to doubt, the zemindar is fain to purchase the silence of his oppressor according to ability. The shugdurs are also paid by the zemindars, and are supplied by them with *russud* (b) gratis.

The Surgowls.—Is the official who is over the shugdurs. There is one surgowl to about every ten villages; his duties are to inspect the shugdurs and to report to his kardar. It is said that he commonly extorts money from the shugdurs, in the same way as we have seen that the shugdurs retaliate on the zemindar; none of those who are thus oppressed ever seem to contemplate such a step as that of complaining to the thanedar of their pergunnah, or the tohsildar of the district,—a curious proof of the estimation in which the justice of those officials, one of whose nominal duties is to receive complaints, is held. They are of course Hindoos.

(a) It is, I suppose, known that the zemindars of Cashmere are Mussulmen, as are also the inhabitants of the cities, with the exception of a few pundits and other officials of Government.

(b) *Russud* means daily subsistence, including fuel. In the larger villages the shugdurs are usually a pundit.

The surgowl is frequently a pundit, and is paid by the zemindars, as is also the

Tarougdar—Whose duty is to weigh the grain when the Government portion is taken from the zemindars. He is always in attendance upon the kardar.

The Hurkara—Is a police constable. There is one hurkara's house to about every twenty villages, all the male members of his family being also hurkaras. He receives reports from, and gives directions to, the

Doom, or policeman, of which there is one to every village, the inhabitants of which are obliged to supply him with russud.

Such is the small official family which the Cashmere zemindar has to support, the greater part of whom are rendered necessary by the complicated system which a collection of land produce entails. According to the custom of the country, the land owned by any one house is common (a); the patwaree of the village has therefore to keep an account of the amount of grain produced by each different kind of crop belonging to each separate house, and to calculate the amount due to Government according to the scale which I shall now proceed to give.

There are two kinds of crops in Cashmere, as in Hindustan, called the rubbia and the khareefa.

The first of these consists of those which ripen about July, and the second of those whose harvest time is about 2½ months later. Of the khareefa, all the crops except the rice

(a) There are usually from two to five families in a house connected by marriage.

are second crops, *i.e.*, are produced from land which has already yielded a crop. The rice ground alone produces nothing but rice; it is sown in May and reaped in September. The Government scale of weights used in collecting their proportion of grain is as follows :—

6 seers = 1 trāk

16 trāks = 1 kharwah

but in selling the grain afterwards to the people the scale is

6 seers = 1 trāk

15 trāks = 1 kharwah.

The extra trāk thus gained by the Government in each kharwah is in order to liquidate the expense of carrying the grain from the villages to the city, which, considering the easy rate at which carriage is paid for by the Government, it must amply do!

The amount taken by the Government and the Government officials upon the rubbia and kharcefa crops is as follows :—

Out of every 32 trāk of each grain of the rubbia crop, the following amounts are taken from the zemindars:—

| | Trāka. | Seers. |
|---|--------|-------------------------------|
| Government share | 20 | 0 |
| The surgowl | 0 | 1 ¹ / ₂ |
| The shugdar | 0 | 1 |
| The tarongdar | 0 | 1 |
| The hukara | 0 | 1 |
| The patwarae | 0 | 1 |
| Servants of the kardar | 0 | 1 |
| Total taken in kind out of every 32 trāks of each grain of the rubbia crop | 20 | 6 ¹ / ₂ |

The rubbia crop consists of the undermentioned grains, and the sums annexed to each are a money tax levied on every 32 trāk of each grain of the rubbia crop, *in addition* to the tax in kind which I have just detailed:—

A Chilkee anna=about $\frac{1}{2}$ Company's anna.

| | | |
|--|------------------|----------------|
| Kunuck (a kind of wheat) | 3 | Chilkee annas. |
| Uiska (barley) | 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ | " " |
| Kurrer (peas) | 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ | " " |
| Tilogogolo (a grain from which oil is made) .. | 3 | " " |
| Kuttan (ditto ditto) .. | 3 | " " |
| Marhar } from which dāl is made { .. | 3 | " " |
| Mong } .. | 3 | " " |
| Mosour } ditto ditto { .. | 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ | " " |
| Krotur } .. | 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ | " " |
| Mout } a grain used for cattle, and also by } the poorer classes of the people for } food | 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ | " " |
| Total taken in money upon every 192 trāk of the rubbia crop | 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ | Chilkee annas. |

Out of every 32 trāk of each grain of the khareesā crop, the following amounts are taken from the zemindars:—

| | Trāk. | Sear. |
|---|-------|------------------|
| Government share | 21 | 2 |
| Mundeer (or temple) tax .. | 0 | 2 |
| Juloos-us-gowl (said to be for the use of the Maharajah's guests) | 0 | 2 |
| The patwaree | 0 | 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| The hukara | 0 | 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| The shugdur | 0 | 1 |
| The surgoul | 0 | 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| Servants of the kardar | 0 | 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| The tarongdar | 0 | 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| Total taken in kind out of every 32 Trāk of each grain of the khareesā crop .. | 21 | 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ |

The khareefa crop consists of the following grains, and the sums annexed to each are a money tax levied on every 32 trāk of each grain of the khareefa crop, in addition to the tax in kind which I have just detailed :—

A chilkeo anna=about $\frac{1}{2}$ Company's anna.

| | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Shālloo (rice in the husk) | 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ chilkeo annas. |
| Mukki (Indian corn) | 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " " |
| Trombu { a grain used extensively for food } ... | 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " " |
| { by the zemindars } | |
| Shāwul { grains used for food by the } ... | 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " " |
| Pingi { people... .. } | 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " " |
| Kupās (flax) (a) | 4 " " |
| <hr/> | |
| Total taken in money out of every 142 trāk of the khareefa crop | 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ chilkeo annas. |

Russudart.—In addition to these money taxes upon the different grain of the rubbia and khareefa crops, there is also a tax called russudart, which is levied annually upon each house throughout the villages, of from 4 annas to 20 annas, according to the number of inmates.

Fruit Tax.—Of the more valuable kinds of fruits, such as walnuts, apples, pears, apricots, almonds, and quince, three-fourths of the annual produce are taken by Government. The duty of preserving them for this purpose falls upon the suz-owl and his shūgdors; the above proportion is collected by the kardar and his assistants, and transmitted according to the orders of Government.

Animal Tax.—Sheep and Goats.—From every village or villages whose land produces 500 kharwahs of grain, two or

(a) The proportion taken in kind upon kupās or flax is in accordance with the scale laid down for the rubbia crop.

three of these animals are taken annually, and half their value returned in coin to the zemindars.

Ponies.—One pony is taken every year under the same conditions, half of his value being returned to the zemindars.

Putloo.—One löie, or woven blanket, is taken annually under similar conditions; half of its value is returned.

Ghee.—For each milch cow half a seer of ghee annually is taken.

Fowls.—From one to ten fowls yearly from each house, according to the number of inmates.

Honey.—In the honey districts, as the Lidur and Wurdwan valleys, two-thirds of the produce are taken yearly by the kardar and others; but I am uncertain whether this is an authorized Government tax.

The accounts of all these taxes are kept by the paltwāreo and mokūddum, and the distribution of returned money is made by them.

The above are the taxes levied upon the zemindars of Cashmere—*i.e.*, upon the population of the country, exclusive of those who live in the larger towns, such as Srinagar, Islamabad, Sopor, and Pampur; and it should be borne in mind that all these taxes, including the amounts both in money and in kind, taken upon the rubbia and khareefa crops, are the regularly *authorized* Government taxes, and not exactions made by officials (*a.*) It is highly probable that

(*a.*) Except the honey, regarding which I have no certain knowledge.

exactions are made *in excess* of the legal amounts herein laid down, but of this it is not possible to speak with perfect certainty (a). Of the evils of the above system, (independently of the enormous percentage of produce taken by the Government,) it is not necessary to say much, since they are tolerably apparent.

For instance, if a zemindar wishes to complain that he has been mulcted of a larger proportion of grain or money than he ought to have paid in accordance with the above complicated scale, he goes to the thanedar of his pergunnah, who makes enquiries, and sends for the kardar and the patt-wāree. If the man's complaint is just, and if the thanedar has not been bribed by the kardar, he gets redress *on payment of a rupee or two*, besides the loss of his time. If the thanedar has been bribed, the zemindar can appeal to the higher tribunal of the tēhsildar; but here again there is the risk of his being forestalled by the united bribes of both kardar and thanedar, so that usually the zemindar finds it a wiser course to pocket his money in silence.

The chief way, however, in which the evils of the system are felt throughout the country, is in the prevention of all trade and barter between the people of the towns and the people of the villages. The latter (except a few shawl bāis who may be located in some of the villages) are all zemindars,

(a) I mean that, supposing no bribes are taken, no oppression practised by any of the numerous officials whom I have named as connected with the collection and division of the land produce, the zemindar will pay what is here laid down, and, *on the hypothesis that all these officials are perfectly honest*, he will pay no more: of the value of this hypothesis, my readers may form their own opinions.

the former are chiefly shop-keepers, shawl merchants, karkandars, shawl bāfs, sādā bāfs, boatmen, and artisans of all descriptions (a). Thus, the people of the towns and the people of the country constitute two large classes, with different wants; the former requires the things that the zemindar possesses—rice, corn, fowls, sheep, milk, &c.; and the latter requires money, which the city people would willingly give him for his produce, to buy those comforts and luxuries which the city can supply, chiefly imported articles, as spices, cotton, cloth, &c. But this natural system of exchange is entirely prohibited by the above arrangement; so that, as I have been informed by the best English authority, there were people in Srinagur, some two or three years ago, with money in their pockets, in a state of semi-starvation. The zemindars had, of course, no surplus supplies to sell them, and the Government kotas (b) were shut for the time.

In fact, it is only very recently that regulations have been made whereby the people are permitted to buy as much grain as they require from the Government, and for this poor boon they are exceedingly thankful.

At some of their spring melas this year, I was struck with the increased number of people as compared with the year before, and, on enquiry, was told that this year they have been allowed to buy food enough to eat, and are consequently

(a) Workers in leather, papier-maché, wood, metal, &c.

(b) The kota is the Government store-house, from whence grain is sold to the people at prices which I shall give a list of in the sequel. Until very recently it was the custom to close these kotas from time to time, and never to sell rice but in very small quantities.

able to come out and enjoy themselves a little. Such is the boon which a paternal Government has recently accorded to the Cashmeeries!—permission to buy their own rice at a very exorbitant rate; and (poor wretches!) so accustomed are they to oppression and misuse of all kinds, that they look upon this as a concession deserving of the utmost gratitude.

It has been truly said that the present system of land produce taxation is no new one introduced by the present dynasty, but had its origin at some remote period. There is, however, an important point of difference, which to the people makes all the difference between a mild system and an oppressive one, and this is in the prices of the grain sold by the Government.

Now, when Gulab Singh began his iniquitous reign, he found the system pretty much the same as I have described, with certain important exceptions (see p. 58), and the prices of the grain thus collected in the Government kotas were as follows :—

A Hurree Singh rupee=8 annas.

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Shālloo (unground rice) | 1 | II. S. rupee per kharwah. |
| Uiska (barley) | 1 | do. do. |
| Mukkì (Indian corn) | 1 | do. do. |
| Oil | 1 | do. do. |

and the remainder in proportion.

When the change in the coinage was made by Gulab Singh, of which I shall have occasion to speak hereafter, he also raised the prices of everything sold by the Government to

a rate higher than the present one, to which they were lowered on the accession of the present Maharajah. The prices at the present time are as under :—

A chilkee rupee=10 annas.

| | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------------------|
| Shâllee | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 ch. Rs. per kharwah. |
| Uiska | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 " " " " |
| Kunuck | ... | ... | ... | ... | 5 " " " " |
| Mukkî | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 " " " " |
| Muttur (peas) | ... | ... | ... | ... | 4 " " " " |
| Mong (from which dâl) | ... | ... | ... | ... | 7 " " " " |
| Mohar | " | " | ... | ... | 7 " " " " |
| Mdsor | " | " | ... | ... | 4 " " " " |
| Kidtur | " | " | ... | ... | 2 " " " " |
| Kuttun (from which oil) | ... | ... | ... | ... | 6 " " " " |
| Mont (a grain used chiefly for cattle) | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 " " " " |
| Tilogogolo (from which oil) | ... | ... | ... | ... | 8 " " " " |
| Tromba (for food) | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 " " " " |
| Pingi } grains used for food by the } | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 " " " " |
| Shâwul } people | ... | ... | ... | ... | |
| Kupâs (flax) | ... | ... | ... | ... | 16 " " " " |

These prices, it will be seen, are more than double those for which the same things were sold when Gulab Singh got the country. And, moreover, it can scarcely be pleaded in behalf of a bad system, that it has been a long time in operation.

The Government kotas are both store-houses for the grain and also the places where it is sold to the people in small quantities.

Any one in want of a large amount must go to the officer in charge of the kotas, who gives them an order upon some one of the kardais, for which the officer takes the payment and

places it to the credit of the kardar in his accounts. There is a considerable loss in buying from the Government kotas, from the amount of dirt accumulated by transit from the villages, &c., so that the purchaser does not, in point of fact, obtain a karwah of shalleo for his two chilkeo rupees, but about a trūk less. It will be remembered that the Government kharwah, when they *sell* to the people, is only 15 trūks. (See page 7).

The chief points, then, with regard to this system of taxation are,—

1. The prevention of that traffic, and consequent intercourse and union between the city and the country people, which are manifestly essential to their comfort and well-being.

2. The comparative poverty which it produces among the zemindars, and the actual want and misery which it helps to produce among the shawl and sādā bāis, of whom I shall speak hereafter.

3. The opportunities afforded to Government and Government officials of creating temporary famines by closing the kotas (a) and thus raising the prices of grain.

4. The countless opportunities for chicanery and oppression which it affords to the numerous local officers employed in carrying out its most complicated arrangements.

In consequence of the want of intercourse and traffic between the city and country people which this system

(a) I do not know that prices have been actually raised by the closing of the kotas, but it is certain that the people have often suffered great misery on account of it. (See p. 12).

produces, there has grown up a feeling of distrust and jealousy between them, most detrimental, of course, to the happiness and well-being of the community, but which it is probable that a mean and selfish Government like that of Jamoo would rather foster than diminish.

By way of final comment upon this extraordinary system, I shall translate a sort of fable commonly known throughout Cashmere, which they have either invented, or perhaps adopted from the Persian, as emblematical of the condition of their country, and the peculiar system of its government :

THE STORY OF 'MÔS DEEN KHAN.'

"Once upon a time there was a very great nobleman, who was a Pathan, and who lived in the mountains to the north-west of Cashmere; his name was Môs Deen Khan. One day he went upon a journey to Srinagur, in Cashmere, in order to pay his respects to the king of that country, and it happened that on that occasion he rode a horse for which he had a very great regard. He was indeed so fond of this horse, that he used to call himself the 'father of the animal' (a).

"When Môs Deen Khan reached Sat-o-kuddel, which is the seventh bridge over the Jhelum at Srinagur, he alighted from his steed that he might proceed to the royal palace on foot; and having given many instructions to the groom with regard to the well-treatment of the horse, as well as especial orders on no account to ride him, he sent him back to his abode in the mountains.

(a) The meaning of this expression will appear in the sequel of the story.

“ But when Mòs Deen Khan got half-way to the palace of the king, he bethought himself that perhaps his servant might ill-treat his horse ; he therefore sent another of his attendants with orders to overtake them, and ascertain whether the beloved animal was well cared for. The menial departed, and found the first servant riding the horse ; he thought, ‘ it is better for me to ride at my ease than to quarrel with this servant, who may perhaps afterwards falsely accuse me to my master ;’ so he too mounted.

“ Now when Mòs Deen Khan got very near the palace of the king, he again bethought himself that perhaps it would be better to send a still more trustworthy servant to be a check upon the conduct of the others with regard to his horse. But when the third servant overtook the party, and found his two predecessors riding, he also mounted ; and the horse, which could have carried one, became so exhausted under the weight of three, that, on reaching his stable, he died.”

The application of the story is obvious enough, and is a good illustration of the natural wit of the Cashmoories. It is particularly applicable at the present time, since the Maharajah himself is said to be in ignorance of a large part of the oppression of his Government, and of the injustice of his irresponsible officials.

Nevertheless, such ignorance is equivalent to guilt : and the desire for the happiness of his subjects, if such a feeling be known to the Maharajah, must be feeble and worthless indeed, since it cannot even rouse him to ascertain for himself the condition of the people from whom he derives his wealth, and for whose well or ill-being *he is responsible* !

It is rarely even, that he takes the trouble to visit the Cashmere valley ; he sits apart in his luxurious palace at Jamoo, contented to receive such reports of the state of his country as his officials may choose to furnish him with.

From time to time, some of the numerous complaints of his baneful administration, which circulate in newspapers and in the talk of society, must penetrate the seclusion of the royal chambers. He hears them apparently unmoved (!)—with indifference or contempt, and never seems to have conceived the idea of investigating their truth or falsehood for himself ; or of seeing with his own eyes, and hearing with his own ears, the actual condition of his people. He trusts everything to his dihwans and wuzeers, who are Hindoos of a different caste from his own, are ill educated, totally ignorant of English forms of government and of English ideas of justice.

There is not only no link between the governing class in Cashmere and the native inhabitants of the country, but there are all those deep-rooted antipathies which must exist between Mussulmen and Hindoos. Those who know the feeling that exists between the two races, do not require to be told that a country whose population is entirely composed of followers of one creed (a), and whose governing power is entirely composed of adherents of the other, must be oppressively and unjustly ruled.

That Mussulmen and Hindoos to a certain extent amalgamate in Hindostan, is no evidence to the contrary. They

(a) The proportion of pundits is too small to be taken into consideration.

have the common feeling of dislike to the English ; and, moreover, the Mussulman of India has lost almost all the distinguishing characteristics of his race and religion. None of the noble qualities which once animated the followers of that creed in so many quarters of the globe, are to be found in the semi-Hindooized, and consequently debased, Mussulman of India.

The people of Cashmere, however, (as I hope to shew in a future work,) are possessed of many characteristics, both intellectual and moral, which command our respect and admiration ; and amongst them, the religion of Mahomet, although sullied by long contact with idolaters, is still kept up with much of its ancient purity, and with a devotion and enthusiasm that would not have disgraced the best days of Islamism.



CHAPTER II.

THE SHAWL SYSTEM.

THE "poshm" which reaches Cashmere by the ordinary traders, is bought up in its raw state and spun into thread of different degrees of fineness by women, the wives of shawl and sàda bàfs, merchants, and even of shop-keepers and others who are unconnected with the shawl trade (a). They sell it in small quantities to shop-keepers (b) in the bazar, from whom it is bought by the karkanders and others.

In order to understand the shawl system in Cashmere, it will be necessary to consider separately that of those which are worked by the loom and those which are worked by the hand, since the classes of people employed in each, and the government regulations affecting them, are essentially different. We will first examine

The Loom System.—A karkander is a shawl manufacturer who employs under him a number of shawl bàfs (c)—from 20 or 30 to 300. He buys the spun thread from the poñiwūnoo,

(a) It seems to be considered a necessary branch of the education of the fair sex in Cashmere, and to be a very ancient institution among them.

(b) The Cashmere name for these people is "poñiwūnoo."

(c) Shawl bàfs, or shagirds, are loom workmen. Sàda bàfs are those who manufacture the plain pushmina by the hand, with the assistance of a small frame. Rufodgas work the pattern upon the plain pushmina by the hand.

and gets it dyed of different colours before it is distributed among his workmen. There are about 100 karkanders in Cashmere, small and great, all of whom live either in Srinagur or Islamabad; but the houses in which their shawl bàfs work are in different parts of the valley, the largest number being in the towns of Pampur and Sopor. A number of overseers are therefore necessary to superintend the work, to be responsible for the pushmina, and to draw the pay of the workmen, etc. These people are called *ustād* (a word which signifies master or, sometimes, teacher) there is usually one over every 25 or 30 shawl bàfs. At the end of each month, the *ustād* takes to the karkander an account of the work performed in that time by each of the men under him, and draws so much pay for each, which is regulated by the amount of work done. The sum thus realized by the shawl bàf is usually from three to five chilkee rupees a month, *inclusive* of the amount deducted by the Government for rice, which is sold to the shawl bàfs under conditions which I shall explain presently. Such a sum is not sufficient to support a family with any approach to comfort, even in so fertile a country as Cashmere (a).

The inability of the karkander to pay his workmen a higher rate of wages, I shall now proceed to demonstrate.

The annual tax levied on each karkander up to the 1st December, 1867, was Rs. 47-8 (chilkee rupees) for each shawl bàf in his employ; from that date a reduction was made of 11 chilkee rupees. The method of raising this tax is somewhat complicated, and most liable to abuse.

(a) The list of prices at the Government kotas, given in the last chapter, renders this apparent (p. 14).

There is in Srinagur a large Government office, called the Dāghshālī, in which are employed about 200 pundits^a for purposes which I shall explain. At their head is an official commonly called the Darōgha of the Dāghshālī. Before a loom shawl can be legally made, a small piece of the intended degree of fineness must be brought to the Dāghshālī. The proposed size is named, and the price is thus calculated; the piece then receives the Government stamp, and is laid up in the Dāghshālī. The karkander receives a paper describing the shawl and giving the date of the stamp, for which he pays at the time Rs. 18·12 per cent. on the price of the shawl; when the shawl is nearly completed, it is taken to the Dāghshālī, and the stamped piece is worked into it. No loom shawl can of course be sold without this stamp; and in order to ascertain that no karkander puts in hand a shawl without first obtaining it, some of the Dāghshālī pundits are continually employed in inspecting the different karkhanas (a) throughout the towns and the few villages in which there may happen to be any.

It appears that they are in the habit of demanding and receiving from the karkanders illegal remuneration for their boat-hire, road expenses, etc., which, as their visits are necessarily very frequent, must amount to a considerable sum.

At the end of each year, the amount paid into the Dāghshālī by each karkander is calculated by the officials of that office, and compared with the amount he would have paid had the tax of Rs. 47·8 per shawl bāf been taken from him instead.

(a) A karkhana is a house in which looms for making shawls are set up.

The deficiency is then paid by the karkander; it rarely or never happens that he has paid percentage in excess, because he entertains a doubt (not, I suppose, unfounded) that in the event of his having done so, the difference would not be refunded to him by the darògha. He restricts himself, therefore to the making of such number of shawls the tax upon which will not exceed the amount of the original impost of Rs. 47-8 per shawl bāf annually.

That such an arrangement is detrimental to the interests alike of Maharajah, karkander and shawl bāf, and beneficial only to the officials of the Dāghshālī, is evident enough. It is not, however, the interest of the Maharajah and the karkander which call for any special consideration, but those of the unfortunate shawl bāf. In order to understand more fully the situation of that individual, and the principal causes of the wholesale emigrations of shawl and sādā bāfs to the Punjab, it will be necessary to advert to an occurrence which happened at Srinagar in the year 1865. In the spring of that year, the Dihwan Kirpa Ram was appointed to succeed Wuzeer Punnoo in the post of Governor of Cashmere.

On his way to take up his appointment, he was met at Banihal by from 1,200 to 1,500 shawl bāfs, who came to complain to him concerning two matters. First, that in consequence of the Government order, no shawl bāf was allowed to purchase more than eight kharwāhs (a) of shāllee yearly, and that such an amount was insufficient for their support.

Second, that the deduction in the price of shāllee sold to them by Government, which had been ordered by the

(a) See note to p. 12 and p. 14.

Maharajah about three years before, should be allowed them in full.

This requires some explanation, which will further illustrate the system of Cashmere government. Soon after the accession of Gulab Singh, the rupee of the country, called that of Hurree Singhia—value 8 annas—was changed by him for the present chilkee coin, value 10 annas,

All taxes, however, remained at the same amount of rupees! Thus the karkander's tax of Rs. 47-8 Hurree Singhia was changed to 47-8 chilkee rupees; necessarily the prices of everything rose in proportion, and the shawl bāf, about six years ago (a), most reasonably requested that for such amount of work as formerly entitled them to a Hurree Singhia rupee, they should now receive a chilkee rupee. They preferred their request to the Maharajah, who decided that half of the difference between the old and the new coin should be paid by the karkander, and half by the Government, to the shawl bāfs.

It was further decided that the manner in which this last portion should be liquidated, was to be by a remission of two and a half Company's annas in the price of each kharwah of shalloe sold by the Government to the shawl bāf (b). Shalloe should therefore have been sold to the shawl bāf at the rate of

(a) About twelve years after the change of coin.

(b) By this arrangement, Government did not pay half the difference, since only eight kharwals were then sold yearly to each shawl bāf. This gives 20 annas yearly from Government to each shawl bāf. But, computing the wages of a shawl bāf at Rs. 4, the difference required by him in a year would be 96 annas. Government therefore paid somewhat less than one-third of the difference.

17½ annas per kharwah, but the Darògha of the Dághshàli, named Rajkark, through whom the Government shallee was sold to the shaw̃l bàfs, ordered that they should pay 18 annas per kharwah, intending to make half an anna on each kharwah for himself (a).

This, therefore, was the second cause of complaint, for which, after waiting some three years, the shaw̃l bàfs assembled to petition their new Governor, Kupar Ram, on his arrival in Cashmere. The answer they received from him was, that he would listen to their complaints when he reached Srinagur. When that event took place, he was again waited upon by the shaw̃l bàfs, but they only obtained an answer that he would attend to them in a few days. This process having been repeated two or three times, the shaw̃l bàfs assembled themselves together, in a somewhat riotous manner, on the maidan beyond the canal at the back of the city, to consult over their wrongs and grievances. In bitter and despairing mood they made a wooden bier, such as Mussulmon use to carry their dead to the place of interment, and placing a cloth over it, carried it to and fro in procession, exclaiming "Rajkark is dead, who will give him a grave?" The house of the individual thus honoured overlooked the maidan, and the whole proceeding was apparent enough to him. He went to the Governor, Kupar Ram, who gave him some 300 or 500 sepoy with whom he proceeded to the maidan. The shaw̃l bàfs fled at the approach of an armed force, and in the crowding and hurry of their flight some five or six were drowned in the waters of the canal. The affair was reported

(a) Whether the shaw̃l bàfs were actually made to pay 18 annas, or only ordered to pay it, is an obscure point, upon which I cannot pronounce with certainty.

to Jamoo, but no enquiries appear to have been made at the time. About a month and a half afterwards, Rajkark did really die—with unenviable feelings, one can fancy—and the shaw̄l bāfs were left to purchase their rice at the reduced rates in peace. The restriction as to quantity, however, remained unchanged, until by the decree of the 1st Decomber, 1867, the boon of permission to purchase eleven kharwahs of shallee yearly was granted to the family of each shaw̄l bāf.

The manner of selling the shallee to the shaw̄l bāfs is as follows:—On the arrival of the grain in Srinagur, a large amount is set aside for the shaw̄l bāfs, and portions of it are from time to time made over to the darōgha for them. When that official receives an order for so much shallee from the Governor, he takes his accounts, and writes orders for each of the karkanders, entitling them to receive so much rice, according to the number of men in their employ, from certain specified boats. The karkander, on receipt of the order, sends for the boat or boats named, and distributes the rice to his shaw̄l bāfs, keeping an account of the amount delivered to each, to be deducted from his monthly wages, the karkander being himself charged with the total cost of the rice in his account with the darōgha.

Such was the way in which the shaw̄l bāfs were allowed to purchase their eight kharwahs, and are now allowed to purchase their eleven kharwahs yearly. It is unnecessary to point out the endless confusion, mistakes, and corruption which must enter into such an arrangement; and this also is to be noted regarding it, that even now, although a sufficient amount of rice is provided for the use of the shaw̄l bāf *in the year*, yet since it is not given in the lump, but in portions from time to time, he may at certain seasons find himself short.

Such was, of course, frequently the case under the eight-kharwah system, when the shaw̃l bāf and his family were often reduced to a state of semi-starvation.

Unable to obtain rice from his master, the karkander, who had issued all that he had received from the darògha, he (the shaw̃l bāf) went to that official to complain that his rice was temporarily withheld.

The darògha sent for the karkander, who produced his accounts, shewing that he had distributed all the rice he had received, and the darògha having also expended all that he had received from the Governor up to that date, the unfortunate shaw̃l bāf was, of course, told to go about his business (a):

By the Maharajah's proclamation of the 1st December, 1837, that "a court for the shaw̃l bāfs has been appointed, under the title of the Darògha-i-Shāl-Darg," the darògha *always* had power to punish shaw̃l bāfs and sādā bāfs, and to adjust their complaints, so far as the Government system permitted him; and some 50 sepoy's are always present during the day at the Dāghshālī for the execution of his orders. The only difference now is, that another official is to hold outcherry in the Dāghshālī, and attend to complaints. He is, however, in a position inferior to that of the darògha, and therefore (in an Eastern Government) subservient to him; and moreover, since the complaints of the shaw̃l bāfs are always either of scant supply of rice, or small payment of wages, the impossibility of any adjustment is evident enough!

(a) The same evils may happen now under the eleven-kharwah system, since the whole amount cannot possibly be supplied to the darògha, and consequently not to the shaw̃l bāfs, at one time.

The most detestable piece of oppression committed against the shawl bāfs is, however, this, that none of them are permitted to relinquish their employment without finding a substitute; which, of course, it is almost always impossible to do!

The shawl bāf may become half blind, as many of them do from the nature of the work; he may contract other diseases, which the sedentary life, and the foetid atmosphere of the low rooms, engender and ripen; he may long to take up some other employment, which will permit him to breathe the fresh air, to recruit the unstrung nerves, the cramped sinews, and the weakened frame; and to prolong the poor boon of existence, which the fearful toil of the loom is hurrying to its close—no! nothing but death can release him from his bondage, since the discharge of a shawl bāf would reduce the Maharajah's revenue by 86 chilkoes a year.

Is it not strange that the Government of India should have the power to remove by a word these miseries and sufferings, and will not say it?

Do those who are in power ever spend a thought upon the people whom their predecessors sold into slavery?

Do they ever picture to themselves those low-roomed, ill-ventilated abodes, where the loom-workers sit at their (a) forced labour day after day, toiling for their miserable pittance?

(a) That is, "forced" in many instances; of course they do not all want to give it up.

Those gaily-coloured threads of wool are not the only ones which these looms weave to their completion! Threads of life, more costly than those of the softest poshm, whose price will be demanded by Heaven yet, are spun out there on the loom of sickness and suffering.

Death or *flight* are the only doors of release open to the heavy-laden shawl bàfs; and thus we have arrived at an understanding of the causes which have produced those extensive emigrations of the Cashmere shawl bàfs to the Punjab. But the latter alternative is only possible to a man in tolerable health and strength, since the difficulties to be encountered, including the guarded outlets of the valley, are many and great. Many of the fugitives make their way over remote and difficult mountain passes, others by temporarily attaching themselves to an Englishman's camp,—one way or another they contrive to reach the Punjab in considerable numbers, and find, in exile, a refuge from the Maharajah's officials of the Dágshàli. Is it not almost incredible that the Government of India has only to say a word to restore these unhappy beings to their homes, and happiness and comfort to hundreds and thousands of suffering families throughout Cashmere, and will not say it?

Consider the half-despairing feeling of one of those refugee shawl bàfs as he prepares to fly like a hunted felon from his wife and children; for to take *them* with him is, of course, an impossibility! How many a miserable hour must he have known, debating with himself whether or not to take the final step! Consider what must have been undergone, in most cases, before he can bring himself to leave the dear ones of his home with the uncertainty of ever again beholding them!

A difficult and dangerous path before him, the possibility of capture and imprisonment, the uncertainty of what he shall meet with in that unknown land which he has heard of by the name of the Punjab, which they tell him the "sahibs" rule over, and do not suffer the poor to be oppressed! The journey across the mountains is, indeed, easy enough for an Englishman with his camp and all its comforts and appliances; but what is it for one of these unfriended outcasts, with scant supply of clothing, food, shelter, and the dread of capture and punishment continually before his eyes?

The English traveller, as he pauses on his pleasant journey towards Cashmere, and looks up at the bright snow-clad summits towering above him, and perhaps thanks God—if he have any gift that way—for making this earth so beautiful, heeds not that other aspect of the world, which the pale, worn figure hastening past him might reveal. He flies like a hunted felon, as I said, and his crime is—poverty! >

Of these fugitives I have learnt that they are in the habit of sending supplies of money to their families, as occasion offers, by some trader or other returning to the Valley; and I am told that the confidence thus placed is never abused. Surely this one fact speaks volumes in favour of the Cashmere character (a) in regard to those two qualities, which they certainly exhibit in a marked degree (considering that they are an Asiatic race)—namely, honesty and loving-kindness.

I never yet heard of an Englishman having had anything stolen by a Cashmeerie, and have very rarely heard of theft

(a) The people of Cashmere are unjustly abused by interested people, who support the Janoo Government, and also by travellers whose knowledge of them is limited to boatmen, shikaries, and others with whom the English visitor ordinarily comes in contact.

among themselves. In their villages, any one who may have become incapacitated from old age or sickness, and who has no near relations to look after him, is supported by the community. In the cities, especially in Srinagar, food and money are given to all of the poor who may come to ask for them from the houses of those who are tolerably well off, on the 11th of every month (*a*), as well as on all their sacred days and especially on the occasion of the *Ido*, and throughout the month *Ramadân*. It were easy for me to multiply instances of this and other traits in their character worthy of admiration, but these pleasanter aspects of Cashmere are somewhat foreign to our immediate purpose, nor have I at present time to speak of them. To return therefore :

The family of a refugee *shawl bāf* is by no means left in peace ; for, according to Hindoo ideas of justice, infraction of the law by any member of the community implicates all his relations. The *karkander*, of course, immediately informs the *darògha* in order that his tax may be decreased (*b*).

The *darògha* sends a sepoy to the house of the fugitive, and, wife or mother or father, or probably all of them, are brought up before the *Dágshālī*.

(*a*) This custom is in remembrance of their prophet *Das Ghyr*, whose shrine is in the environs of the city, near the *Dagh-i-dilawar-khan*, and is probably one which those who thoughtlessly abuse the Cashmere people are entirely ignorant of.

(*b*) Which is not done, however, until the end of the year, even in case of death. Thus, if a *shawl bāf* dies in the first month of the year, the *karkander* pays tax for eleven months for a dead man ! and when the name of the defunct is at last erased from the *Dágshālī* list, the officials of that admirable institution make the *karkander* pay a fee to them in honor of the occasion !

They are fined a rupee or two, or suffer a few days' imprisonment, by the Government, whose cruelty and injustice have driven from them, in some cases, their almost only means of support.

Such is the case of those who fly from the Valley ! But how many are there who would fain fly and cannot, who are driven to their unhealthy, and sometimes fatal, labour in the karkhana by the sepoy of the Dágshàli !

* * * * *

Such is the loom system, and the misery which it produces ! The obvious remedy for most of its evils would be the abolition of the Dágshàli, and the institution of a triennial census of the shawl bàfs, shewing how many were at that time employed by each karkander. The tax, which ought to be lowered to 25 or 30 chilkee rupees on each shawl bàf annually, should be collected in advance, by which arrangement the karkander would be enabled to increase the number of his workmen for three years, without an increase of tax (the Government at the same time reaping the corresponding benefit of sustaining no loss by a possible decrease in the number of workmen). At the end of the first three years, the lessors would probably shew an increase in the total number of shawl bàfs, and in the course of six or nine years, the Government revenue from the loom shawl tax would most likely be larger than it is now ; and, what is of more importance, the karkander would be enabled, and should be compelled, to raise the present wages of his shawl bàfs to 10 or 12 chilkee rupees a month, thereby enabling them to live in their native country in very tolerable comfort : *provided* that the

law of forced labour was abolished, and a reasonable money tax, instead of produce, taken from the zemindars (a).

As the matter stands at present, the condition of the shawl bāf has only been bettered to the extent of $5\frac{1}{2}$ chilkee rupees a year, by the remissions of the 1st December, 1867. It now remains for us to examine

THE HAND-WORK SHAWL SYSTEM.

A sàda bāf is the workman who makes the plain pushmina from the spun poshm, upon which the coloured threads are afterwards worked with needles by the workman who is called a "rufodga." The sàda bāfs are immediately under the dardgha of the Dāghshālī, and in that office a register of their names is always kept; for, like the shawl bāfs, they are neither allowed to leave the valley nor relinquish their employment. The sàda bāfs buy the poshm themselves from the bazaars, and manufacture pushmina usually in their own houses, sometimes employing an agent to sell it for them to the merchants and others. No pushmina can, of course, be sold by them without the Dāghshālī stamp, the tax on which is levied at the rate of $10\frac{1}{2}$ chilkee rupees for $4\frac{1}{2}$ yards of pushmina. Pundits are employed, similarly to those who visit the karkhanas, to ascertain that no pushmina is sold by a sàda bāf without having paid the above tax. It is said that their visits are dreaded by the sàda bāfs, since the pundits oblige them to pay a sort of black-mail, under pretence of boat-hire, road expenses, &c.

(a) It is unnecessary to point out the facilities for evasion of the tax as it is at present collected, by collusion between the dardgha and the karkander, which would be in a great measure removed by the institution of a triennial census.

When plain pushmina is bought from a sàda bāf for the purpose of having a pattern worked upon it, or of being dyed, it must be again taken to the Dāghshālī, where the first stamp is washed out, and a paper given by the owner, in which the intended ground colour is named; as soon as it is dyed, it must be again taken to the Dāghshālī, and a second stamp is affixed, and a second tax of 18 chilkee rupees is levied upon the same $4\frac{1}{2}$ yards. The shawl work may then be completed upon it; when finished, it is taken for a *fourth time to the Dāghshālī*, when the owner receives a certificate that the tax has been paid, which he is bound to give to the purchaser of the shawl, who is required to produce it at the custom houses through which it may have to pass on its way to the Punjab or elsewhere.

The amount paid by a rufōdga or other to a sàda bāf for a piece of plain pushmina is one chilkee rupee per yard, *in addition* to the market value of the thread and the cost of the Dāghshālī stamp.

A yard cannot be made under from two to four days; the position, therefore, of the sàda bāf is but slightly better than that of his brother of the loom, but he is not allowed to leave the valley or relinquish his trade.

The circumstances of the rufōdga are tolerably comfortable, nor is he in the same state of serfdom as the shawl and the sàda bāf, being permitted the privilege of changing or giving up his trade, should he wish to do so.

CHAPTER III.

TRANSPORT OF SUPPLIES FOR TROOPS.

A LARGE number of troops being usually kept in the countries of Gilgit and Astor, supplies of rice, etc., are sent up in the autumn of every year from Cashmere for their use. Zemindars are pressed from every part of Cashmere to carry these supplies. They are collected by the different kardars from the villages under their respective control, where a kind of register is kept, that each house may furnish its quota of men in turn. Those who are thus collected are paid from 4 to 7 chilkee rupees for the double journey by their kardar, and sent by him in charge of a hurkara to Bandipoor, where there is a sort of depôt presided over by a Hindoo official. From him they receive their loads, with a memorandum of the amount which they have to deliver to the Governor of Astor, and from him they bring back a receipt to be presented to the official at Bandipoor. Now, since the full amount that an ordinary man can carry is given to the zemindar, and since little or nothing can be purchased on the road, it is obvious that he must either eat part of his load, or starve.

Nevertheless, on his return to Bandipoor, the quantity thus rendered deficient, as shewn by the receipt, is taken from the zemindar in money ! (a) The journey from Bandi-

(a) I believe, however, that it is now usual to send the supplies by the zemindars only as far as Gurais, from whence they are transported on ponies. What the payment is on this arrangement, I do not know. In proportion, I suppose, to what is, or recently was, the payment of a zemindar for the whole distance.

poor to Astor, for a laden man, occupies twelve days. Such is the ordinary system in time of peace; and if this were all, it would not perhaps, considering the far greater evils than inadequate payment (*a*) for work that disgrace the Government of the country, be scarcely worth writing about. But, when some of the frequent disturbances in Gilgit necessitate an increased number of troops, the Cashmeerie zemindars, and others, have to suffer worse evils than a month or two of bad and ill-paid labour.

The last occasion was in 1866. In the summer of that year, it was supposed to be necessary to send up an unusual number of troops, and zemindars, boatmen, and even tradesmen of

(*a*) Grossly inadequate certainly. A zemindar will ordinarily have three days journey from his village to Bandipoor, twelve days to Astor, where he will be delayed for a few days; he will also be delayed at Bandipoor, as well going as returning; therefore the double journey *from his village to Astor and back* cannot take less than fifty days. For this the zemindar receives from four to seven chilkas rupees. Now, when an English traveller takes zemindars into the mountains to act as coolies, (not as shikaries, who are paid a higher rate,) he usually gives them six Company's rupees *a month and rissud*, or eight without rissud. The sepoy in Astor appear to be under no control, and to ill-treat the people of the country as much as they please. When I was in that district in October, 1867, I found a sepoy abusing an old man and trying to take something from him—his shoes I think. I called the sepoy, but he would not come; he retreated to the guard-house of the village, where were some other sepoys, into which I pursued him, and brought him to my tent, where I bound him with ropes and made him sit as a prisoner, without his tulwar, for some time.

I mention this little incident in order to remind those who may feel scandalized at hearing of Englishmen in Cashmere who act "contrary to law," that throughout the dominions of the Jamoo Government there is properly speaking *no law!* (See Chapter IV.—Powers of the Magistrate; imprisonment, term of, never specified, &c., &c.)

the city were pressed to carry their supplies and baggage. They were sent off in a hurry, without the slightest provision being made for their lodging, clothing, or subsistence on the road, beyond their allowance of *one seer of rice a day* for their food, and payment.

It is commonly reported that numbers of them died on that occasion; many of them did certainly die during that year on the Gilgit road, engaged in carrying government stores, and from the causes I have mentioned, namely, want of food, shelter, and clothing; but I believe that the actual time was somewhat later. After those who had been sent with the troops had returned to Cashmere, it was found necessary to send further supplies, it having been then determined to keep the increased number of troops there throughout the winter.

Accordingly, late in the autumn of 1866, the supplies were sent on the backs of zemindars, taken from their villages in the manner I have described; and many of those men died on the road from cold, exhaustion, and want of food (a).

I have elsewhere taken occasion to notice this truly Hindoo-like act of barbarity, but was then under the impression that the men died during the summer, when sent with the troops to Gilgit. I did not then know that the zemindars had been again sent late in the autumn, at which time it appears that the deaths occurred from the causes I have mentioned. The inhumanity of the authorities only appears more glaring from the fact of their having sent men without any equip-

(a) "Want of food," although they carried rice on their backs, since, in the absence of fuel, and consequently of boiling water, rice is not available for food.

ment, along a road like that, from Cashmere to Astor, at such a season of the year. It was necessary, no doubt, to supply the troops; but if the Government arrangements were so extremely bad, that no provision had been made beforehand in a place where there is always the possibility of an increased demand for troops, an adequate amount of equipment, clothing, and arrangement for the shelter of those who were sent up with the supplies should have been made. But nothing of the kind was done; the men were sent off over the passes with their heavy loads, and many of them perished as I have said.

A Hindoo-like act of barbarity I have called it, since it proceeded not so much from active cruelty as from a passive carelessness to human suffering; a dull, stupid indifference like that with which the driver of a bullock waggon in Hindoostan urges on his starved and yoke-galled beast, with blows and foul language, until the miserable brute falls dead on the road (*a*). I have travelled that road from Astor to Cashmere, and can testify (*b*) that it is one of the worst of the mountain paths which lead out of Cashmere into the interior, both on account of the steepness and height of the passes, and still more from the scarcity of villages, and the unwillingness of the inhabitants to sell supplies of any kind.

(*a*) The state in which bullocks, donkeys, and dāk-gharry horses are frequently seen on the public roads of Hindostan, is a disgrace to the Government of India. Their owners would be punished in England: why are they permitted to escape in India? The state of the last ought to be well known to the present Viceroy, who patronizes that mode of conveyance in his annual journeys between Simla and Calcutta.

(*b*) There are indeed two roads from Gurais to Astor, but I was told that the one I did not see was the worst of the two; of course I do not know which the zemindars took.

I crossed the Kumori pass, which leads from the Gurdās into the Astor valley, in October, 1867. It was covered with snow for many miles on the Gurdās side, and for two days' journey on the Astor side. I saw no human habitation for at least three days in crossing from one valley to the other, and no shelter of any kind (a). I myself, with servants, coolies, tents, &c., and the advantage of fine weather, had some difficulty in the pass. We were shelterless by twilight in the middle of the snow at a great elevation, and only succeeded in reaching a spot where tents could be pitched, by observing a part of the mountain side which we could descend rapidly, and thus reached a spot of ground free from snow as darkness came on.

Some troops had crossed a few days before me, and the number of dead tattoos by the side of the track bore witness to the difficulty they had encountered.

But it was in the month of November that these zemindars were sent up to Gilgit, where the pass must have been considerably worse, and they were sent without the slightest provision for their shelter, clothing, or food, beyond the loads of rice which they carried on their backs. *How* many died, it is of course impossible to say! What Hindoo Government would ever think of recording the names or numbers of those who had died in their service?

Picture to yourself, oh reader! those desolate scenes where the Cashmere zemindars had to lay down their lives! None save those who have seen such can fully realize their

(a) Except that when I crossed there were the remains of a few wigwams put up by troops, who had passed three or four days before, and which would be destroyed by the first storm.

horrors. No imagination is powerful enough to realize them : the waste, hopeless aspect of the unbounded stretch of snow ; the intensely keen blast of the wind, which strikes you with the force of an eagle's wing as it sweeps down upon you through the ravines ; above and around you are snowy peaks and summits, and precipitous slopes of rock, upon whose edge sits the avalanche waiting for his prey.

Through such scenes, heavily laden, the zemindars take their way. Powerful and hardy are the sons of Cashmere ; patiently they toil onwards through the drifting snow, in the name of Allah and his prophet ! Many encourage each other with words of hope : it may be that they will yet reach the *other side* in safety. Alas, no ! From two or three the strength is already departing, and the keen wind is paralysing the sinews.

Slowly the conviction fastens upon them that they shall *never* quit those frightful solitudes, *never* see again their homes, nor those who dwelt there waiting their return, far off in the sunny vale of Cashmere !

Who dare realize such thoughts—such moments ?

* * * * *

Let us leave the scene of death. But oh, British reader ! forget not that these and other frightful miseries are produced by a government whose chief is a feudatory (a) of the British crown ; by a government which derives its permanence from the protection of the British rule ; by a government which the British power *forced* upon the people of Cashmere ; by a government into whose hands British

(a) See the Treaty of March, 1846.

statesmen *sold* the people of Cashmere ; by a Government, therefore, whose existence is a disgrace to the British name ! It is at once a memorial of that foul act, when, like the arch traitor of old, we bartered *innocent lives*, which fate placed in our hands, for a few pieces of silver.

And it is a standing witness that we accept that act of the past, *now that its consequences have been seen*, and take the burden of its responsibility upon ourselves.

CHAPTER IV.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE punishment for killing a cow used formerly to be death ; but on account, I believe, of the remonstrances of the British Government, it was changed to imprisonment for life. The method, however, of carrying out the mitigated sentence renders it scarcely more merciful than the capital penalty.

The Hindoo vengeance does not only fall upon the actual cow-killer himself, but on the whole of his family ; and all who in any way participated in, or were cognizant of the deed, are imprisoned with him also, I believe for life !

In addition to this, after each day's investigation into the circumstances of the so-called crime, they are cruelly flogged, and when consigned to prison are branded and tortured with hot irons (a). Insufficient food, and general cruel treatment, hasten their deaths, before which there has been, I believe, no instance of any one connected with the slaughter of a cow having been released. But no formal sentence is pronounced in any case when imprisonment is awarded, whether for small offences or great ones.

The offender is sent to prison, and neither he nor any one else knows how long he may be kept there. Possibly there are many who have been forgotten ! (b)

(a) All the offenders are, I am told, subjected to torture, but the actual delinquent more severely than the others.

(b) An insolvent debtor is usually handed over by the court to the creditor to serve as a slave.

Of justice, there is, in fact, little or none. Offences against the Government or against Hindoos are punished with undue severity, while offences perpetrated by Hindoos or Government officials are either passed over, or adjudicated with partiality and injustice. There has, indeed, been recently established in Srinagar a new court for the trial of petty offences and misdemeanours, consisting of five Suni Mussulmen, two Shiah, and three Pundits: this seems a fair distribution of religious bias; but their powers only extend to about ten chilkee rupees fine, nor does their court in any way interfere with the power of the Chief Magistrate to imprison whoever he pleases, *for any cause or no cause!* (a)

Before the advent of English visitors this year (1868), a number of prisoners were, I believe, sent in batches from the Srinagar gaols to Jamoo, lest the number of prisoners, and the *causes* of their punishment, should be ascertained and commented upon by the European community. This, however, I cannot vouch for, although I believe it to be perfectly true.

The system of the city police resembles that of the land-tax system, in the number of different grades of officials, and consequent facilities for bribery and intimidation which it affords. There is a policeman—myledar—told off to every 20 or 30 houses; his business is not only to keep order, but to report to his zilladar all that goes on. The zilladar is a sort of constable, having 20 or 30 myledars under him; he reports to the sub-kotwal, the sub-kotwal to the head kotwal, and the last-named functionary to the Chief Magistrate. If the subordinates bring a false accusation against

(a) I only refrain from giving special instances for fear of the consequences to which the sufferers might be exposed.

a family or an individual, the latter will sometimes escape punishment; but their accusers are unpunished for the crime of false accusation.

The tax on the sale of land is enormously high, being $4\frac{1}{2}$ annas in the rupee (1) exclusive of the necessary *douceur* to the clerks, who are, of course, pundits. A marriage license costs three rupees, and about a rupee more is taken by the pundits; and in the case of a second or third marriage, in the case of the first wife or wives being alive, great difficulties are thrown in the way of the Mussulman by these officials, unless they are properly bribed, since it appears that their opinion as to the advisability of permitting a second marriage is consulted in many cases by the Magistrate. Sometimes the license is refused unless payment of Rs. 100 or more is made (a). In short, in this as in most other matters there is no law but the will of the Magistrate.

* * * * *

All classes of the Mussulman community are tax-payers, except the tailors. Even the boatman, whose pay is only Co.'s Rs. 2-8 a month, is taxed! Perhaps the poorest and worst off of all, except some of the *shāwl bāls*, are a class of people who live along the shores of the Anchar lake, not far from the city. They subsist on the sale of what they can procure from the lake, consisting of a coarse kind of grass for cattle, reeds which they weave into matting, and fish, which by a very recent order they are permitted to catch and sell.

For the privilege of thus making use of the lake, they pay a considerable yearly tax to Government. It was impossible

(a) That is, to the pundits. It is commonly reported that the present Magistrate, Dihwan Budinath, is above taking bribes.

to ascertain with any degree of certainty what the amount was; but that they are in a state of extreme wretchedness and poverty, and that the Government take a considerable sum of money from them annually, is certainly true. I went into some of the cottages, and found them in as miserable a condition as the appearance of the people outside betokened—windowless, fireless, lightless, and bare!

Some children and others were shewn to me suffering from different diseases. I gave them what I could, and told them to come to my house in Srinagur, and that I would take them to a hospital. They never came; they seem quite hopeless and unable to believe that any one would ever do anything for them. Their food is only rice, and the coarse vegetables they produce in their lake gardens; and the only fuel they can procure is dried horse dung! And these people pay taxes!!

There is no lack of fuel in this country. All round the shores of the Wular Lake, magnificent forests of deodar are flourishing in luxuriant strength and beauty, but the heavy duties on wood, as on all other things which are brought into the city or its precincts, render the poorer classes utterly unable to obtain it.

And now, before closing this long list of miseries and atrocities, there is yet one other misery and atrocity, and one other iniquitous source from whence the Jamoo Government derives its revenue, which I shall present for the consideration of the reader.

The *sale* of young girls in Cashmere to established houses of ill-fame, is both protected and encouraged by the Government,

and helps to swell that part of his revenue which the Maharajah derives from the wages of prostitution. The license granting permission to purchase a girl for this purpose, costs about 100 chilkee rupees, and an additional payment is, I believe, made to Government when the unfortunate victim enters upon her miserable career. The very fact that such sales take place, is due to the grasping and avaricious nature of the Government, since none but the very *poorest and lowest* classes of the people ever sell their children (a).

It is with a Government as with an individual; one crime stands not childless, but is the fruitful parent of an hundred more. Sale of children is a consequence of poverty, which is produced, first, by extreme taxation; and, second, by the high prices of all kinds of food, which is caused by the Government system of taking the land produce into their own store-houses.

Those who have been bought as I have described, cannot even quit that life should they desire to do so, since they cannot, of course, raise money to repay to their purchaser either the price paid for them or the license tax to Government.

It is not many years ago since others, who *had not been bought*, were nevertheless prohibited by Government from relinquishing their fearful calling, and were *refused permission to marry*, for the same reason as the shawl bāfs are

(a) The only class of people who sell their children are certain of the villagers, who are shoemakers and workers in leather. The other Mussulmen of Cashmere consider them to be a low and degraded race, and will not eat with them. I once asked, "What could induce the woman to sell her child?" and was answered, "Poverty!" But no Mussulman of any other class would do such a thing; he would rather starve!

still prevented from turning to other employments, namely, the loss of the high taxes (a) which these two unfortunate classes of the people pay to Government.

I will offer no word of comment upon these things; the facts speak eloquently enough for themselves. If they fail to arouse pity and indignation and horror in the hearts of English readers, that class of people must have changed their natures since I left the civilized world eighteen months ago to travel in the Himalayas.

(a) Some of the *nautoh* girls pay 80 and 100 chilkee rupees a year. I am told that these "unfortunate females" are now permitted to marry, and turn to a better and a happier life if they wish to do so. But there can be no certainty—scarcely probability—that the Jamoo Government, which continues to derive revenue from the kind of "sales" I have described, will not withdraw this permission and enforce its former barbarous order.

I know of one instance in which a woman who entreated the Government to be allowed to marry and lead a virtuous life, was refused permission to do so. She attempted to fly with a man she wished to marry, but was prevented or brought back, and is now what she was before. I believe this took place only three years ago, and similar barbarity may again be perpetrated at any moment—a text the missionaries would do well to enlarge upon.

CHAPTER V.

MORAL AND POLITICAL REASONS FOR THE PERMANENT APPOINTMENT OF A RESIDENT AND ASSISTANT TO CONTROL AND DIRECT THE ACTION OF THE JAMOO GOVERNMENT.

(At the present time we are all indulging in a harmless, but not very dignified species of self-glorification about the Abyssinian war. The press is full of laudatory notices of England's conduct on this great occasion; we read of "pure and holy motives," of "disinterested action," "a righteous struggle for the noblest ends, &c." A good opinion of self is, no doubt, as gratifying to a nation as it is to an individual. Nevertheless, one cannot but be rather forcibly reminded of the old proverb, that "self praise is no praise;" and foreign nations who read our numerous self congratulatory expressions on having for once achieved an unselfish public action, may feel tempted to say that such a course must be somewhat an unusual one with us, since its adoption provokes us to trumpet our own praises to all the four quarters of the globe, in a style that might have described some heroic and unequal struggle of a whole nation in defence of hearth and altar, or of a weak ally to *whom her word was pledged!* Perhaps no stronger internal evidence than this outburst of self-laudation for the performance of an act which it would have been simply disgraceful not to have done, could be found to remind us that our character as a nation has sunk from what it was. There was a time, not so very long ago, when we,

almost single-handed, resisted the oppressor of Europe, and through the terrible campaign of the Peninsula gave freely the lives of our best and dearest, that we might at last be able to say to Despotism, "Thus far, and no further!" There was a time when we, first of nations, led the way to the abolition of slavery, and at a loss and sacrifice which was felt in every house in England, we cast away the thing which we felt to be an evil and a shame from amongst us.

At that time England was looked up to as the one power whose public actions were based upon other than selfish considerations; she was honored as the nation who would flinch from no sacrifice and from no danger to fulfil a noble object, or defend a sacred cause; and she was then, undoubtedly, the first of nations in the world. Her voice was first in the councils of Europe; her opinion on all great questions was waited for with eagerness, and heard with reverence. What is her position now? Others better qualified than I may answer that question. But whatever be her position in regard to power, influence, authority, no one can have the hardihood to assert that she has any longer the moral power and dignity that were once accorded her in the days when the "moral support" of England was something more than an empty sound. >

No one can imagine that she retains the character of a generous and high-minded nation, so far as her public conduct is concerned.

Perhaps she does not care whether she retains it or not. But the frantic delight into which she seems to have been thrown by having actually done something which she need not be ashamed of, would seem to indicate the contrary; and

induces me to entertain a faint hope that she still retains a sufficient regard for "pure and holy motives" to induce her to perform that act of *justice* and mercy which such motives call upon her to undertake in behalf of the people of Cashmere, whom, in the year 1846, she sold into a slavery but little less oppressive and detestable, than that which she abolished from her domains in the West. }

That such is the true light in which the question of interference with the Jamoo Government ought to be viewed, it is now my task to shew.

{Cashmore was sold to Gulab Singh under the following circumstances :—

By the conditions made with the Lahore Durbar, after the first Punjab war, a certain sum of money was demanded by the British Government to defray the expenses of the campaign ; but the Durbar being unable to refund the full amount, it was resolved to take Cashmere and certain neighbouring hill states in lieu of the deficiency, and to transfer these to Gulab Singh for an equivalent sum, which arrangement presented the further advantages of reducing the power of the Sikhs, and of gaining Gulab Singh as our ally.

In Cunningham's "History of the Sikhs," there is the following passage :—"As two-thirds of the pecuniary indemnity required from Lahore could not be made good, territory was taken instead of money, and Cashmere and the hill states, from the Beas to the Indus, were cut off from the Punjab and transferred to Gulab Singh, as a separate sovereign, for a million of pounds sterling. The arrangement was a dexterous one, if reference

be only had to the policy of reducing the power of the Sikhs ; but the transaction seems scarcely worthy of the British name and greatness, and the objections become stronger when it is considered that Gulab Singh had agreed to pay 68 lakhs of rupees as a fine to his paramount before the war broke out, and that the custom of the East as well as West requires the feudatory to aid his lord in foreign war and domestic strife. Gulab Singh ought thus to have paid the deficient million of money as a Lahore subject, instead of being put in possession of Lahore provinces as an independent prince."

(Such is the plain historical statement of the outward facts connected with the sale of Cashmere; but there are certain other considerations which give that transaction a peculiarly odious aspect, and render it a dark stain upon the history of the British rule in India. These are—

First, that in no portion of the treaty made with Gulab Singh was the slightest provision made for the just or humane government of the people of Cashmere and others upon whom we forced a government which they detested.

For purposes entirely selfish, we deliberately sold millions of human beings into the *absolute power* of one of the meanest, most avaricious, cruel, and unprincipled of men that ever sat upon a throne.

Second, that after our expulsion from Cabul, and the murder of Shah Soojah, a Government proclamation (a) was issued, that Dost Mohamed's accession to the throne was sanctioned by the British Government, "because *principle*

(a) See Arnold's "Policy of Lord Dalhousie."

and policy alike forbade that power to force a ruler upon a reluctant people."

Five years had not passed when, by the treaty of the 16th March, 1846, we proclaimed the miserable hypocrisy of the statement by which we had vainly sought to hide our weakness when Dost Mohamed regained his rightful kingdom.

It was contrary to our principle to force a ruler upon the wild and turbulent Affghans, to whom any settled government would have been a blessing, and who would not have suffered any ruler to oppress them with impunity. But Lord Hardinge and Sir Henry Lawrence failed to perceive that there was aught unjustifiable in forcing upon the weak and unresisting people of Cashmere, not a ruler who, like our Affghan puppet, was of the same race, the same religion, the same people as those upon whom we sought to impose him, but one of a creed between which and that of Islam the most deeply-rooted antipathies exist, rendering any sympathy, or any cordiality, or any sentiment other than disgust and hatred, utterly and for ever impossible between the governing and governed classes.

Nor was it a ruler only whom we forced upon "a reluctant people," but the crowd of rapacious and unprincipled ministers, courtiers, hangers-on of every grade who followed the fortunes of Gulab Sing. These, raised like himself from the lowest classes, and invested with the titles of Dihwan, Wuzeer, Tèhsildar, &c., descended upon Cashmere like a flock of hungry vultures, and swept away the prosperity and happiness of its people; and their descendants are worthy of their ancestors. The dihwans, tèhsildars, thanedars, &c., who rule Cashmere, are, as a rule, avaricious, mean, and cruel; wholly untrustworthy, and powerless apparently to conceive

of the idens of truth and justice ! Finally, we did not, as in the case of our Affghan interference, force upon Cashmere a ruler who was to govern by our advice, and was bound to attend to our suggestions, but one whom, by the terms of the treaty, we rendered irresponsible for any outrage or injustice he or his ministers might choose to commit, with regard to the internal administration of the country.

The third consideration which makes the sale of Cashmere yet more iniquitous, is the character of the man into whose absolute power we sold the people of that country.

In support of the terms I have previously used in describing the nature of Gulab Singh, I shall quote the following passage from Mr. Lepel Griffin's "Punjab Chiefs," an official work compiled and published by order of the Punjab Government :—

" There are perhaps no characters in history more repulsive than Rajahs Gulab Singh and Dhyan Singh. Their splendid talents, and their undoubted bravery, count as nothing in the presence of their atrocious cruelty, their avarice, their treachery, and their unscrupulous ambition.

" The history of the siege of Lahore is too well known to be repeated here. For seven days the garrison held out bravely against the whole Sikh army, which lost in the assault a great number of men, and it was not till Rajah Dhyan Singh returned from Jamoo that negotiations were opened, by which Sher Singh ascended the throne and Rani Chand Kour resigned her claim.

" Gulab Singh, laughing in his sleeve at the success of his and his brother's plans, marched off to Jamoo amidst the

courses of the Sikh army, carrying with him a great part of the treasure, principally jewels, which Maharajah Runjit Singh had stored in the fort, and *which plunder, five years later, helped to purchase Cashmere !*"

After the investment of Gulab Singh as Maharajah at Amritsir, he sent some regiments to take possession of Srinagar, and to take over the fort, &c., from Sheik Maun-ud-deen. Whether the Sheik had received information from the Lahore Durbar regarding the change of masters which Cashmere had suffered, it is impossible to say ; at all events, he refused to admit Gulab Singh's forces into the city, or to acknowledge their master as having any authority in Cashmere. Upon the refusal of the Dogras to quit the valley, the gallant Sheik sallied forth at the head of his troops, and an engagement was fought at the back of the Hurree-Singh-Bagh, in which the Dogras were completely routed, and one or two leaders of note were killed (a). A large number of prisoners were taken, to whom, the Cashmeeries say, the Sheik gave money and clothing to enable them to reach the Punjab, and that in a few days' time there was not a single Dogra left in the valley (b). When news of this event reached Gulab Singh, he applied to the British Government for assistance, to enable him to take possession of his new kingdom, and an order was sent to the Sheik, requiring him to yield obedience to the new sovereign of Cashmere, or to consider himself as an enemy of the British power.

(a) One of these was the Wuzoor Sukput ; he was buried where the fakoor's house stands, half way down the long avenue ; and the fakoor receives, I believe, a handsome allowance to say prayers over the grave.

(b) Except a few who remained shut up in the fort, where they had taken refuge.

The Sheik wisely chose the former alternative, and Gulab Singh's troops were permitted to occupy Srinagur in peace.

From that period, as I have shewn in Chapters I, and II, the misfortunes and miseries of Cashmere commenced. The change of coin, the increased taxation, the increased prices, the shutting up of the kotas, the mismanagement and oppression of the Daghshâli, the restrictions in the amount of rice purchaseable yearly by each shawl-bâf, the consequent diminution in their number, the consequent order that no shawl or sâda bâf might leave either his employment or the Cashmere valley, and similar orders regarding the *nautch* girls. (See p. 108-5),

All these miseries and atrocities date from the commencement of the iniquitous reign of Gulab Singh !

The Sheik Imaum-ud-deen was a Mussulman, and had been, I am told, appointed Governor of Cashmere by Sheru Singh. Under his rule the country was well and justly governed. The shawl bâfs and other classes were allowed to purchase as much rice as they required, nor were any of the people hindered from leaving the valley (a). From this benificent Government we took Cashmere, and plunged it into all the miseries which it has since suffered.

The Cashmeeries, in speaking of these things, do not seem animated with any unjust or undue feeling against the Maharajah himself; and in speaking of the misfortunes of

(a) The Cashmeeries say that the country was then so prosperous, that the people of the Punjab used to come up and settle in Cashmere, but now the Cashmeeries are forced to fly to the Punjab.

their country, the well-informed amongst them always date their origin from the alteration of the old coin by Gulab Singh. (See Chapter I.)

The manner in which that was carried out, paved the way for all the oppression of which I have given an account. That, they always, say, was the beginning of evils. Still less are they inclined to blame the present Maharajah for the evil administration under which they suffer; nor do I, except as far as the ignorance of a ruler regarding the people under him involves a neglect of sacred duties and responsibilities amounting to guilt. The immediate criminality rests with the executive officers throughout Cashmere and its dependent states, but, I believe, in a much higher degree with the ministers who are located at Jamoo.

The Home Government !

* * * * *

Let us pause here for a moment to review our position. I have, I think, conclusively shown that the cry of oppression in Cashmere, so far from being nonsensical, as was falsely declared by the Calcutta *Englishman* of 12th February, 1868, has but too good cause for its efforts to obtain a hearing,—efforts which would seem to have been hitherto in vain, alike in their appeal to the justice of the British Government, and the humanity of the Anglo-Indian public.

I have also shewn that we deliberately forced upon a more than “reluctant” people, a despotic government of the very worst description, at whose head was a ruler of a character held infamous, *even* by natives of the East.

I have therefore, I conceive, shown that towards the people of Cashmere we have committed a wanton outrage, a gross injustice, and an act of tyrannical oppression, which violates every humane and honorable sentiment, which is opposed to the whole spirit of modern civilization, and is in direct opposition to every tenet of the religion we profess. >

It remains for us to ascertain whether reparation towards those whom we have thus injured be still possible, without the committing of any fresh piece of injustice.

The following is a copy of the Treaty of March, 1846 :—

“Treaty between the British Government on the one part, and Maharajah Gulab Singh on the other, concluded on the part of the British Government by Frederick Currie, Esq., and Brevet Major Henry Montgomery Lawrence, acting under the orders of the Right Honorable Sir Henry Hardinge, G.C.B., one of her Britannic Majesty’s Honorable Privy Council, Governor-General, appointed by the Honorable Company to direct and control all their affairs in the East Indies, and by Maharajah Gulab Singh in person :—

“ARTICLE I.

“The British Government transfers and makes over for ever, in independent possession, to Maharajah Gulab Singh and the heirs male of his body, all the hilly or mountainous country, with its dependencies, situated on the eastward of the River Indus, and westward of the River Ravee, including Chumba (a), and excluding Lahoul, being part of the territory

(a) This is probably a mistake, since Chumba is perfectly independent of Cashmere. My copy of the treaty is taken from Dr. Ince’s “Handbook of Cashmere.”

ceded to the British Government by the Lahore State, according to the provisions of Article IV of the Treaty of Lahore, dated 9th March, 1846.

“ARTICLE II.

“The eastern boundary of the tract transferred by the foregoing Article to Maharajah Gulab Singh, shall be laid down by Commissioners appointed by the British Government and Maharajah Gulab Singh, respectively, for that purpose, and shall be defined in a separate engagement, after survey.

“ARTICLE III.

“In consideration of the transfer made to him and his heirs by the provisions of the foregoing Articles, Maharajah Gulab Singh will pay to the British Government the sum of seventy-five lakhs of rupees (Nanuk Shāhee), to be paid on ratification of this Treaty, on or before the 1st October of the current year, A.D. 1846.

“ARTICLE IV.

“The limits of the territories of Maharajah Gulab Singh shall not at any time be changed without the concurrence of the British Government.

“ARTICLE V.

“Maharajah Gulab Singh will refer to the arbitration of the British Government any disputes or questions that may arise between himself and the Government of Lahore, or any other neighbouring state, and will abide by the decision of the British Government.

“ARTICLE VI.

“Maharajah Gulab Singh engages for himself and heirs to join with the whole of his military force the British troops

when employed within the hills, or in the territories adjoining his possessions.

“ARTICLE VI.

“Maharajah Gulab Singh engages never to take or retain in his service any British subject, or the subject of any European or American state, without the consent of the British Government.

“ARTICLE VIII.

“Maharajah Gulab Singh engages to respect, in regard to the territories transferred to him, the provisions of Articles V, VI, and VII of the separate engagement between the British Government and the Lahore Durbar, dated 11th March, 1846.

“ARTICLE IX.

“The British Government will give its aid to Maharajah Gulab Singh in protecting his territories from external enemies.

“ARTICLE X.

“Maharajah Gulab Singh acknowledges the supremacy of the British Government, and will, in token of such supremacy, present annually to the British Government one horse, twelve perfect shawl goats of the approved breed (six male and six female), and three pairs of Cashmere shawls.

“This Treaty, consisting of ten Articles, has been this day settled by Frederick Currie, Esq., and Brevet Major Henry Montgomery Lawrence, acting under the orders of the Right Honorable Sir Henry Hardinge, G.C.B., Governor-General, on the part of the British Government, and by Maharajah Gulab Singh in person, and the said Treaty has been this day ratified by the seal of the Right Honorable Sir Henry Hardinge, G.C.B., Governor-General.

“ Done at Umritsur this 16th day of March, in the year of our Lord 1846, corresponding with the 17th day of Rubbee-ool-awul, 1762 Hijree.”

That Article IV of the above Treaty has been in more than one instance broken by the Jamoo Government, the following extract from Major Cunningham's “Ladak” (a) will, I conceive, sufficiently prove :—

“ In the autumn of 1846, during the rebellion of Sheik Imaum-ud-deen in Cashmere, there was a slight disturbance in Zauskaz, which was promptly repressed by the Vizier Basti Ram, who is now one of the confidential servants of Maharajah Gulab Singh. Since then the whole country has been quiet, and the passive Tibetans have yielded to a power which they find it unsafe to resist. The neighbouring countries of *Gilgit and Chilas have been added to the Maharajah's kingdom*; and the same prince whose dominions only twenty years ago were limited to the petty state of Jamoo, now rules undisputed master of Cashmere and Western Thibet, from the sources of the Shayok to the head of the *Gilgit River*.”

These are instances in which the Jamoo Government has violated the treaty of 1846; but there is another of more recent occurrence, and which is not generally known in India, and of which the home authorities must be in total ignorance.

‘ In accordance with Article II of the Treaty, three officers were appointed by the British Government to survey and

(a) “Ladak: with Notices of the surrounding Country” By Alexander Cunningham, Brevet Major, Bengal Engineers. London, 1854. Chapter XII, page 355.

determine the "limits of the eastern boundary of the tract transferred to the Maharajah." These were, Major Cunningham, Lieutenant Strachey, and Dr. Thompson. The map, therefore, published by Major Cunningham with his work on Ladak, (to which I have just referred,) may be considered to shew correctly, not only the eastern boundary, but the limits of those other portions of the Maharajah's dominions which he helped to survey, as they existed at the time such survey was made.

The north-eastern boundary of the Maharajah's dominions is defined in Major Cunningham's map to be the water-shed of the Kara-Korum range. Even without the authority of that map, I am justified in assuming that to have been the north-eastern boundary of the Jamoo territories, both because it is the natural boundary of the country of Nubra and its northern valley and ravines, and because the Kara-Korum has always been considered as the farthest limit of the Ladak district by the Yarkundis, who dwell on the other side. However, in 1865, the Jamoo Government despatched a small body of troops across the Kara-Korum, with orders to occupy the country as far as Shah'dula, or Shâdula, and to build and garrison a fort there, which was done.

Shah'dula is about three days' journey beyond the Kara-Korum pass. The fort was provisioned and occupied by the Jamoo troops during the summers of 1865 and 1866, the force being withdrawn in the winter on account of the severity of the climate. Towards the end of 1866, the newly established ruler of Yarkund and Kashgar had taken the country of Koteh, and had further strengthened himself by the expulsion or conciliation of those who were disaffected towards his Government.

It was therefore probably from prudential motives that the Jamoo troop were not sent to re-occupy their new fort in the spring of 1867.

Some time during that year, Yakoob Begi sent a handful of men to Shah'dula, who destroyed the fort and took the supplies and stores with which it was furnished (a).

It is true that a Government map has recently been published, which shews the boundary line of the Maharajah's territory in this direction to lie along the Kara Kash River, and which consequently includes Shah'dula within the Jamoo dominions; but this map was not published until the end of 1866, whereas the Maharajah's force went to Shah'dula and erected and garrisoned the fort in the spring of 1865, or earlier. The existence of this map, therefore, cannot be pleaded as having given the Jamoo Government any authority for such extension of territory.

The map in question was founded upon a survey made by Mr. Johnson in the year 1865, after the occupation of Shah'dula by the Jamoo garrison; and the boundary line therein laid down is entirely at variance with that shown in the map which accompanies Major Cunningham's work on Ladakh, which was published by Government authority in 1864. (See page 64).

(a) The latest accounts from Yarkund say that the Kooshbeghee has greatly endeared himself to his subjects by the strict justice of his administration and by abolition of the slave market, which was formerly held in the Yarkund bazaar. He is said to be engaged in massing his forces at Kashgar, his frontier town, distant about seven marches from Kokand, which is occupied by the Russians.

The title of the map is

MAP OF
THE PUNJAB, WESTERN HIMALAYA,
AND
ADJOINING PART OF TIBET.

From recent Surveys, and based upon the Trigonometrical Survey of India.

Compiled, by order of the Honorable Court of Directors of the East India Company,

BY JOHN WALKER,

GEOGRAPHER TO THE COMPANY.

The fact then remains that the treaty of March, 1846, has been in several instances broken by the Jamoo Government, and it *therefore* follows that the British Government is not bound by that treaty to abstain from that interference with the affairs of Cashmere which the miserable condition of the people, the impediments thrown in the way of traders, the exclusion of English travellers, &c., have now for so long demanded (a).

(a) Not only are English tourists, sportsmen, scientific men, &c., excluded from the Maharajah's dominions during six months of the year, but English and French traders also, although *native* traders from the Punjab and elsewhere pass unquestioned. Of course, all the natives of the hill states, and possibly many of the Punjab itself, explain this extraordinary fact by supposing the British Government unable or afraid to demand from the Cashmere Rajah that which common courtesy would seem to require from him. Is it very improbable that the insolence and outrages of the frontier tribes have been increased, or in some instances caused, by this mistaken estimate of our position with regard to the Maharajah of Cashmere?—an estimate which the Government of India does its best to foster, by not only excluding all its servants from the Jamoo dominions during the winter, but by limiting the numbers of those who wish to travel there during the summer,

It may be pleaded by the supporters of the Maharajah that the countries of Gilgit, Chilas, and Astor were annexed by his father many years ago, and that no notice having been taken at the time, it would now be an ungracious act on the part of the British Government to make such infringement of the treaty a ground for interference. With regard to the matter of the Shah'dula fort, it may be urged that so slight an aggression into a barren and deserted region can scarcely constitute an infraction of the treaty sufficient to justify the interference of the British Government with the Maharajah's internal administration.

To these and similar considerations the following answers appear to be sufficient :—

First.—That the Jamoo Government has shewn itself incapable of just or humane rule.

Second.—That the Jamoo Government has for many years pursued a system of oppression and misrule under the protection and countenance of the British Government:

Third.—That it has consequently become a stigma and a reproach to the British Government, both among the European and native community of India.

Fourth.—That there are no means of rendering the administration of the Jamoo Government consonant with that which should distinguish a power protected by the British Government (see Article IX of the Treaty), except those of active interference.

Fifth.—That the British Government committed an act of gross injustice in forcing the rule of Gulab Singh upon a reluctant people.

Sixth.—That, *therefore*, to forego the power of making *reparation* to the people we injured, which the infractions of the treaty give to the British Government, would be an act of injustice and cruelty scarcely inferior to that which we perpetrated when we sold the people of Cashmere into the slavery of Gulab Singh by the iniquitous Treaty of 1846.

In a word, we cannot exercise generosity towards the Jamoo Government without committing a fresh injustice towards the people to whom we owe reparation.

With regard to the matter of the Shah'dula fort, it should be remembered that although a slight instance in itself, yet little things have sometimes led to great wars; and that since by Article IX. of the Treaty the British Government is bound to protect the Jamoo Government against all external enemies, it is obvious that such little encroachments as that of Shah'dula might plunge us into a war with all the Mussulman tribes of Central Asia. The *Pall Mall Gazette* remarks, without any particular comment:—"We believe that it has just been ruled that the Maharajah is at liberty to hold whatever foreign relations he may care to entertain without reference to us." Evidently, the *Pall Mall Gazette* must be totally ignorant of the nature of the Treaty of 1846, since a glance at Article IX will convince any one that if the Maharajah is permitted to enter into whatever foreign relations he may please to entertain, he may at any time plunge us into a war with Turkistan, or Bokhara, or with Russia herself!

Suppose, for example, that next year the Maharajah were to send a few troops to occupy a portion of the country beyond his Gilgit boundary, and that Russia had conquered Budakshan, and concluded an offensive and defensive

alliance with that country and Bokhara, and that a force subsidised by a few regiments of Cossacks and Kirghings, officered by Russians, was sent to chastise the Jamoo chief for his temerity by annexing to the Russia-Bokhara territory say only Gilgit and Astor, and the valley of the Indus so far as to include Skardo, we should have a pretty little mountain campaign cut out for us, with more formidable opponents than the undisciplined robbers of the Hazara, who are now giving us the trouble of beating them. It is possible that, in the event of such a contingency, our home authorities would re-consider their verdict, that the Maharajah has a "right to entertain what foreign relations he pleases," &c.; and it may be as well to remember this, that if the Shah'dula affair is not considered of sufficient importance to release us from whatever engagement of non-interference may be implied in Article I of the Treaty, we cannot at any future time plead that any similar act of aggression on the part of the Jamoo Government is a violation of the treaty of sufficient importance to release us from our engagements contained in Article IX, by which we are bound to protect the Maharajah's Government against *all external enemies*!

It is to be hoped, however, that our relations with Russia will be those of peace, not war; and that we shall, at no distant period, co-operate with her in spreading the blessings of civilization and settled government among oppressed peoples and savage tribes (a). Should such be our happy destiny, the importance of free trade and unrestricted transit (for Englishmen as well as natives) through Ladak and

(a) See M. Vainberg's description of slave life and slave trade in Central Asia, which Russia is already, even amid the difficulties of her first advances among hostile and barbarous nations, treading down beneath her feet.

Cashmere must be evident enough. On this subject, the following extract from a Russian paper, called the *Golos*, of December, 1866, which I have taken from a late number of the *Calcutta Review*, is interesting and important :—

“ An amicable division between Russia and England is quite practicable. What has not been conquered by one power might, without any opposition, be conquered by the other, more especially as the advantages of such acquisitions are contested by many.

“ We even do not see any reason for dissatisfaction in the possibility of our Central Asiatic frontier soon forming the boundary of the Anglo-Indian empire. Such a frontier would, at all events, determine the commercial fields for the disposal of English and Russian productions, and would considerably weaken, if not altogether remove, all dangerous rivalry. That the sale under such circumstances of English and Russian productions would rapidly increase, is evident. *The chief obstacles to trade in this region are the incessant depredations and rapacious exactions made by petty Asiatic despots.*

“ All these drawbacks must at once disappear under English and Russian rule, and then an interchange of commodities will freely take place.

“ *The expansion of the frontier to a mutual point of contact between English and Russian territory, will not only decrease the chances of collision between Russia and England, but also conduce to amity and a feeling of friendship between those countries, seeing more especially that a conflict between them in such a distant region would be disadvantageous to both, and only lead to mutual losses.*”

CONCLUSION.

It is impossible to avoid drawing a mental contrast between the careless indifference with which, on the occasion of the sale of Cashmere, all question of moral right was complacently ignored both by the Government and the public, and the virtuous indignation into which it seems that a large party of the former, and a small proportion of the latter, are thrown at the idea of any transgression of legal right with regard to interference in the affairs of Cashmere.

In the former case, injustice and inhuman disregard for the welfare of our fellow creatures were set in the scale against our political interests, and the former kicked the beam. In the present case, a question of legal right is set against the performance of an act of justice and reparation to those whom we have injured, and the rescue of millions of human beings from oppression and misery, against a slight invasion of the political rights of a Government which has shewn* itself incapable of just or humane rule.

Is it then a recognised Government principle that all considerations of morality and religion must give place to those of political interests? It would seem so in the present instance. But if it be so, how insatuated seems the opinion of those who think that we can ever persuade the natives of India to embrace a religion whose outward forms only are adhered to and supported, and whose essential and sacred principles are as dust in the balance against motives of self-interest and solid advantage.

That our failure in imbuing the natives of India with any regard for the spirit of Christianity has been almost complete,

the conduct of the wealthy landowners of Bengal seems sufficiently to prove. I quote from the *Friend of India* of the 20th August, 1868 :—

“No language can be too strong to characterise the selfishness and apathy of the zemindars in the inundated districts to the south of Calcutta, and in Midnapore; as on the occasions of the cyclone of 1864, the Orissa famine of 1866, the Nuddca inundations, and the cyclone of 1867, the wealthy landholders of Bengal have been found wanting.

How can we expect them to act otherwise? An Orissa or Jellamoota zemindar might say: “True! I have not *given* my money to relieve the distress of my tenants, but what is that compared to the sale of a whole people for money? I have not given money to relieve distress which was produced by *natural causes*, but your Government is contented to *obtain* money at the cost of *producing* misery by *their own* act among a happy and contented people!” (a)

In conclusion, I have one earnest word to say regarding the foregoing pages, and that is to protest against the idle and unmeaning criticism of those who are ignorant of the subject. There is only one question to be asked, and answered, with regard to the work, and that is, Are the statements herein contained concerning the Jamoo Government true or untrue?

(a) In Cashmere especially, one is not surprised to find that missionary labours are a complete failure. I wonder how a missionary can show his face there! How can he ask a Cashmiree to embrace our religion?—a religion which teaches its votaries that human beings may be sold like cattle, and that to hand over a nation into the horrible slavery of one of the worst forms of eastern despotism “for ever” (see treaty) is no crime, but only state policy!

And there is only one method by which that question can be answered, namely, by the course which I have myself pursued, of strict and laborious investigation in Cashmere itself.

Should that be done, as it is my earnest wish that it may be by a Government Commission, the truth or untruth of the charges I have brought against the Jamoo Government will be ascertained.

Of the futility of the Maharajah's promises, there has been ample proof in the fact that none of those made to Sir Robert Montgomery in 1864, concerning reduction of duties, &c., were kept. The Maharajah affirmed that he had given orders to his officials to carry out the promises, &c., but Dr. Cayley's report from Ladakh, for the season of 1867, shewed that no improvement upon the old system had been attempted.

The Maharajah is, therefore, unable to control his officers in Ladakh, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that he is likewise unable to control them in Cashmere! Nay, it is but just to suppose that the Maharajah's officials in all parts of his dominions act systematically in defiance of their master's orders and wishes, since the Maharajah is represented as being of a humane and benevolent disposition, and desirous to promote the well-being of the subjects for whom he feels himself responsible (a).

(a) See the proclamation of the Maharajah of Cashmere, which was printed in the *Lahore Chronicle* of the 28th December, 1867, in which it is said that "the good of his subjects, which are the good gifts of the Almighty, and their happiness, and the supporting the poorer classes, lie on his (the Maharajah's) shoulders as a burden."

Since, then, the Maharajah is manifestly unable to carry out his benign intentions, how thankful he will doubtless feel to the British Government, should they resolve upon furnishing him with the means of protecting his people (for whose welfare he is so laudably anxious) from the rapacity of ministers and officials who must undoubtedly (if the character the Maharajah claims for himself be true) conduct every branch of the administration in a manner diametrically opposed to the wishes of H.H. the Maharajah of Cashmere and Jamoo.



